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ABSTRACT

This book is a personal account of 8 years of teaching in Texas jails and prisons. It recounts numerous anecdotes of life in prison and the experience of teaching prisoners, most of whom had very low literacy skills. It describes the prison culture and what inmates must do to survive in it. The book details the methods that have worked in reaching and teaching prisoners, including the following: treating them with respect, believing they can learn, using a variety of presentation methods, encouraging group discussion, and teaching critical thinking and social skills. The narrative addresses the prejudice of the prevailing culture toward minority groups, especially Hispanic Americans, and provides insights into their cultures. It also cautions against the current emphasis on incarcerating more people for longer terms, because such methods do not rehabilitate criminals but make it even harder for them to function later in the free society. The book contains 16 resources. (KC)

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